DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 323 734 EC 232 164

AUTHOR Janney, Rachel; And Others
TITLE A Problem-Solving Approach to Challenging Behaviors: Strategies for Parents and Educators of People with Developmental Disabilities & Challenging Behaviors.
INSTITUTION Syracuse City School District, NY. Special Education Training & Resource Center.; Syracuse Univ., NY. Child-Centered Inservice Training and Technical Assistance Network.
SPONS AGENCY New York State Education Dept., Albany.; Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Aug 89
CONTRACT G00-86-300358
NOTE 48p.; For related documents, see EC 232 158-163.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavior Change; *Behavior Problems; *Developmental Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Intervention; Parent Teacher Cooperation; *Problem Solving; Teamwork

ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed for parents and educators of people with both developmental disabilities and serious behavior problems. It outlines a problem-solving process to develop positive, nonaversive ways to address serious behavior problems at home and school or in the community. Examples and sample worksheets are offered and blank worksheets included for reproduction. A team approach is advocated as most effective in defining the problem, gathering data, developing a theory, planning, implementing, and evaluating. Eight references listed. (PB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED323734

A PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Strategies for Parents and Educators
of People with Developmental Disabilities
& Challenging Behaviors

August 1989

Rachel Janney
Child-Centered Inservice Training and Technical Assistance Network
Syracuse University

Jim Black
Special Education Training & Resource Center
Syracuse City School District

Mary Ferlo
Exceptional Families Resource

EC 233104

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Luanna H. Meyer
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CONTENTS

Preface....2

Introduction....3

Purposes of Challenging Behavior....5

Planning for Change: A Team Approach....8

Problem Solving Process....11

- Step I: Define the Problem....12
- Step II: Gather Information....15
- Step III: Develop a Theory....21
- Step IV: Make a Plan....24
- Step V: Use the Plan....31
- Step VI: Reconsider the Plan....33

Conclusions....35

References, Credits, and Further Reading....36

Blank Problem Solving Forms....37

Preparation and dissemination of this manual was supported in part by Contract #GOO-86-300358, awarded to Syracuse University by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education and by funding from the New York State Education Department to the Special Education Training & Resource Center (SETRC) of the Syracuse City School District. This material does not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, the New York State Education Department or the Syracuse City School District, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

PREFACE

This booklet is for parents and educators of people who have developmental disabilities ***and*** serious behavior problems. It outlines a problem-solving process to develop nonaversive (positive) ways to address serious behavior problems at home, school, and in the community. Although it can be used as a resource packet for parents or educators to use on their own, the approach will be most effective when parents, educators, and other people who know the person well work together to develop and use a plan.

Throughout the booklet we show how the problem-solving process might work by using examples and sample worksheets that have been filled out. Blank worksheets are included at the end for you to copy and use to develop a plan for positive behavior change.

INTRODUCTION

In the past many children with severe disabilities were "out of sight and out of mind." They were frequently removed from their families, schools, and communities and placed in institutions and separate schools. Today, many of these children continue to live at home with their families and attend schools in their communities where their behavior problems are more visible. Some children with developmental disabilities ***and*** severe behavior problems behave in ways that can be very difficult for parents, brothers and sisters, and educators to deal with. A very small number of children may hurt others by hitting, kicking, scratching, biting, and/or spitting. Others may hurt themselves by banging their heads, hitting themselves, or tearing at their body, face or eyes. Finally, some children are challenging because they frequently destroy property, refuse to cooperate with requests, or scream and tantrum.

One approach to treating these challenging behavior problems that has been talked about a lot recently is punishment, particularly ***aversive treatment,*** or methods that inflict physical pain or emotional distress upon people. In many programs across the nation, children have had lemon juice squirted in their mouth, been slapped, pinched, sat upon, locked up in small rooms or boxes, been excluded from school for long periods of time, and even been been subjected to electric shock in an effort to change their behavior. These practices have been reported in professional journals and even recommended to parents as ways to deal with their children. More commonly, "less" aversive methods such as physical restraint, time-out rooms, overcorrection, and exclusion from school have been used to try to change children's problem behaviors. These methods are often used as the "first step," before resorting to other "more" aversive methods.

In their struggle to help these children, parents, educators, and researchers have begun to ask some important questions:

Why do some children with developmental disabilities sometimes behave in ways that we find very difficult to handle?

Do some children have behavior problems that are so serious that punishment – even aversive treatments that inflict physical pain or emotional distress — must be used to stop these behaviors?

If we choose not to punish, how do we respond to behaviors that we find very disturbing or even dangerous?

As parents, educators, and friends of persons with severe disabilities and challenging behavior, we do have to respond to stop or change some behavior. We don't want people to hurt themselves or others, or to be so uncooperative that they are very difficult to teach or live with. However, there are alternatives to punishment as ways of stopping very serious behavior problems.

The approach described in this booklet is based on the belief that the methods we use to deal with the behavior problems of persons with disabilities should not only be effective, but must meet other standards as well. Our approach uses problem-solving strategies that are: gentle, preventative, normal, educational, individualized, and ongoing.

STANDARDS FOR STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

1. Gentle	We believe that behavior change programs should not cause physical pain or emotional distress to the person or others.
2. Preventative	We focus on avoiding situations that lead to failure and helping people do things successfully.
3. Normal	We should choose methods that are as normal as possible so that we can help people be seen as more ***like*** than ***different*** from others.
4. Educational	People with serious behavior problems often need to learn to communicate and interact with others, to develop self control, and to use their time in positive ways. They also need opportunities to practice these new skills in their daily lives. Our approach focuses on teaching new skills, not just controlling behavior.
5. Individualized	All individuals are different! Our approach emphasizes decision-making and problem-solving on an individual basis for each child.
6. Ongoing	As individuals grow and change they may develop different behavior problems. We must be prepared to use this process in an ongoing manner.

PURPOSES OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Before describing the problem-solving process, we will begin by considering why children sometimes display challenging behaviors. Nearly all behavior, including problem behavior, has a purpose. Tantrums, aggression, or self-injury may be disturbing to us, and we certainly want to help people stop. However, people who do these things are not necessarily "disturbed" themselves. More accurately, they have behaviors that are "disturbing" to others. Disturbing behaviors often tell us that the child does not have other ways to get his or her needs met. Furthermore, disturbing behaviors often "work" in some sense, or the child would probably stop using them.

What are some of the ways that problem behaviors can "work" for people? What purposes can these behaviors serve? In our experience almost all specific problem behaviors or actions have one or more of five purposes: ***attention, escape/avoidance, wanting something, self-regulation, or play.***

The first three of these purposes, ***attention, escape/avoidance, or getting something,*** involve a communication with another person to achieve some purpose. If a person doesn't have an "acceptable" way of giving these messages, he or she may use another behavior, such as a tantrum, hitting himself or others, or destroying property. There are many things we need to communicate to others:

- o I want
- o I don't want
- o Yes
- o No
- o I'm tired/hot/cold/ bored/frustrated/ lonely
- o I want attention
- o I like you
- o I need help
- o Leave me alone
- o I don't understand
- o I'm scared

At times, all of us have difficulty communicating some of these things in positive ways. Do you ever pout or mope when you don't get enough attention, give someone the "silent treatment," or even have a "tantrum" when you get really mad? Imagine a child with who knows only a few words or signs, or hasn't yet learned to talk or sign at all! He has difficulty expressing thoughts, feelings, wants, and needs, and has few ways of controlling his environment. Most decisions are made for him. Considering this, it's not hard to understand why he might use ways that we consider "disturbing" to communicate with us. His behavior is a way of controlling his environment. When a behavior frequently occurs when other people are around, it is probably a child's way to communicate or get what he wants/needs.

The last two purposes, ***self-regulation and play***, are often somewhat different. They are ***not*** social in nature because they do not really have a "message" for other people. The child is not trying to get attention, get out of doing something, or obtain some item that he wants. The purpose of self-regulation and play is simply doing the behavior itself. The child may not care whether other people respond to the behavior.

The following stories describe young people we have known. Their challenging behaviors may help illustrate these points.

PROFILES

Jim	Jim loves people, but he does not talk and uses only a few signs and gestures to communicate. The most effective way he's found to say "Pay attention to me" is by grabbing or pinching people. Jim has learned that sitting nicely and smiling sometimes works as a way to get attention, but pinching always works. If attention is what he wants most, it "works" for him to use pinching to get it.
Bobby	Bobby is a 5 year old boy who doesn't talk. Sometimes he lies on the floor at school and refuses to get up. When his teacher looked more closely at the behavior, she found that this happened when he was made to do work like a stacking cone or a peg board which he already knew how to do and had been doing for years! From Bobby's point of view maybe it's not so inappropriate to want to ***escape*** those situations.
Joyce	Joyce is 10 years old. She has learned over time that when she ***wants something*** the best way to get it is to scream very loudly! In the end most people (teacher, parents, brothers & sisters, and peers) will give in - even offering choices of items or activities to quiet her down!
Nick	Nick rocks back and forth quite a lot! At first teachers and parents through that this was quite a "problem" for Nick. After a closer look and lots of discussion, his parents and teacher realized that Nick usually was able to continue with his work. In fact rocking actually seemed to help him focus! People in the community didn't even seem to pay much attention. Nick used rocking as a way to ***self-regulate***.
Karen	Karen likes to throw things. After watching the behavior very closely her teacher and parents decided that it wasn't a way for her to get attention, or the get out of a situation. Karen just seemed to like the feeling of throwing objects and seeing them bounce off walls and ceilings. Throwing things was a way to play when she didn't have anything else to do.

Understanding the specific purpose that a problem behavior serves for a person is very important to the problem-solving process. Once you understand how the behavior "works" for a person, you are in a better position to develop a plan to change that behavior by helping the person use more conventional behaviors that will serve the same purpose for them.

PURPOSES OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Attention

Behaviors that serve the purpose of getting attention are the child's way of saying something like; "Hello - pay attention to me," "Come talk/yell/make angry faces at me," or "Get off the phone and play with me!" It's important to remember that some children crave attention, even negative attention like being scolded or yelled at. Children can even learn to prefer negative attention. It's often much more dramatic!

Escape/ Avoidance

Behaviors that communicate the desire to escape or avoid certain activities or people are like saying: "Stop!" "No!" "This is to hard/easy/boring!" "I would like a break now." Behaviors that have this purpose usually occur during activities or situations the person doesn't seem to like. Some children may use problem behaviors to avoid getting dressed, having their teeth brushed, sitting at the dinner table, going to bed, or being in the living room when their brother and sister are talking, fighting, or playing.

Getting Something

To be human is to want! Children may want food, toys, special activities or other things. Some behavior problems may be a way for the child to communicate that they want one of these, or to protest when these things are taken away or end.

Self-Regulation

Not all problem behaviors are forms of communication. This is often true of behaviors such as hand flapping, fingertapping, spinning objects, even hitting or scratching oneself — behaviors that are often described as "self-stimulatory" or "stereotypic." The child may do these things to regulate his or her energy level. Some children do these things when there is too much going on around them, and others when there is not enough going on. Actually, so-called self-stimulatory behaviors do not always prevent the child from focusing or learning. Some may actually help a child to focus, and be no more distracting than *our* leg-swinging, pencil-chewing or nail biting is.

Play

In some cases, the purpose of the behavior is play. The child just likes doing it, especially if there is little else to do. Many of the same behaviors that are used for the purposes of self-regulation can also serve as forms of play, such as unusual body movements, spinning, dropping, or throwing things. Usually, play behaviors are more absorbing of the child's attention, and unlike behaviors used for self-regulation, the child is unable to perform other activities at the same time.

PLANNING FOR CHANGE: A TEAM APPROACH

It's often said that "two heads are better than one." Actually, when it comes to addresing difficult behavior problems, the more heads the better. Serious behavior problems call for a team effort. Not just parents *or* teachers *or* psychologists, but a planning team of parents *and* teachers *and* psychologists *and* other interested people.

What if the other persons in your child's (or student's/client's/etc.) life are not interested or able to participate in a team effort? In that case you may have to "go it alone." However, we believe that the effort to bring others together to help with the problem solving process will pay off in the long run. Try to find at least one other person to work with you!

The benefit of a team approach is that when people get together they bring different ideas, knowledge and skills to the group. Teachers know how to teach , parents often know their child "best," psychologists often understand behavior modification principles. By themselves, these different skills and understandings are often not enough. But together–with team work–they are very powerful.

The team approach is not - "I'm the parent/teacher/psychologist, I know the most about this, therefor we will do it my way!" The team approach means that all persons involved share information and come to a decision together. In fact, the team's job is to reach a decision that all can agree on. When the team agrees on a decision, it's likely to be a better decision that one based on only one person's knowledge.

Qualities of Good Team Members. The first important quality of team members is ***not placing blame***. The problems that the team is working on are not the fault of any one person. Not the parent. Not the teacher. Not last year's teacher. Not the principal. And, most importantly, not the child! Placing blame is not helpful for solving problems. It creates tension and defensiveness. A more helpful approach is to assume that everybody is doing the best that they can under the situation. In the process of working together to change the problem behavior, members of the team may need to change some of their behaviors, but no blame is attached. A second quality of team members is ***honesty***. Being honest means that you are involved in the process. If you don't agree with something you say so! Only through honesty can the team benefit from the knowledge and skills of all its members.

Finally, team members are ***accountable***. They follow through on what they say they will do. (At least they try!) The team approach will probably require every member to do some work outside of the group's meetings. For example, the child may need to be observed, resources gathered, new skills taught. Each member of the group will

need to accept responsibility for activities to which they commit themselves, and gently hold others to their commitments.

The Team Approach to Decision-Making. Most of us have had experiences in group problem-solving that are, shall we say, "painful." Teams can wander aimlessly and never arrive at any decision. On the other hand, teams can sometimes be dominated by a self appointed "leader." This section will offer strategies to help prevent this. We will also offer suggestions about what decisions need to be made at each step in the problem-solving process and how to make those decisions. It won't always be an easy process, but your team will have guidelines to use.

Important decisions need to be made at each of the six steps of the problem-solving process outlined in this manual. When all the team members feel comfortable with answers and decisions reached by the group, it's time to move on to the next step. Sometimes the team may move along quickly. Other times the process may take longer, with individual team members collecting information and gathering resources between meetings.

We have provided Team Decision-Making Worksheets to be used at each of the six steps of the problem-solving process. We strongly suggest that you start at the beginning and work through all steps. Using the worksheets in a meeting involves actively sharing in the decision-making process. We offer the following suggestions:

1. Have team members take on specific roles. In groups with less than four members, each person may need to fill more than one role. In groups with more than four members, some members may not have a formally assigned role. Rotate roles for different sessions. This will keep your ideas flowing! We suggest the following roles:

Recorder; Keeps notes as the team works.
Time keeper; Keeps the team aware of time spent and time remaining.
Task Master; Keeps the team focused on the decision-making tasks at hand. For example, "Now we are at the brainstorming stage - let's hear everybody's ideas."
Reflector; Gives team members feedback on the group process. "It seems like we are stuck at the point were John and Sally disagree. Can you find some way to compromise?"

2. Review the text and the worksheet provided in the manual for the relevant step of the problem-solving process.

3. Brainstorm answers to the questions and decisions that are presented. In many cases the team will need additional information to arrive at good answers. In this case, brainstorm the best way to collect the needed information. During brainstorming, all ideas should be accepted and recorded without criticism. Let the ideas flow! The *Task Master's* role is to make clear that the team is in the brainstorming stage. You may want to make a sign as a visual reminder that you are BRAINSTORMING. The *Reflector* can give feedback to the group and/or individual team members about whether the group is really accepting all ideas.

4. Evaluate the ideas recorded during the brainstorming session by discussing the "pros" and "cons" of each idea. You may want to make a sign that says EVALUATION to remind the group of your goal at this stage. Cross off ideas or answers that you agree are not the best. Your goal is to arrive at agreement on the best answer(s) or idea(s). Circle the items upon which the team agrees.

5. Establish accountability. The issues, ideas, or answers that you agreed on will often require some action. Who will "collect data," "write out the new plan for the team," or "teach the new communication skill." It's important to record *who* agrees to specific tasks and *when* they will complete them. The important point here is that everyone pitches in and helps, and that members accept accountability and require it from each other. Many plans have failed not because they were poorly designed but because they were never actually used!

6. The final stage in this problem solving approach often takes place at the next meeting. Now the team reviews the tasks that were assigned to each member. You might review the new information collected or discuss the plan that was written by a member. As a team you will decide when to move on the next step in the problem-solving process.

THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

The problem-solving process described here requires us to be observant and to consider the world from the child's perspective. We begin the process by identifying the behaviors that we feel it is important to change, then develop a theory about the purpose of the behavior and a plan for change. This process can be broken down into six steps.

THE 6-STEP PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

1.	**Define the Problem**	Ask yourself, "what is the problem?" If there are several problems, decide where to start .
2.	**Gather Information**	Consider when the behavior usually occurs, and usually does not occur... **Who** is there? **What** is going on at the time? **When** does it happen? **Where** does it happen?
3.	**Develop a Theory**	Be a "detective!" Make your best guess as to why the child uses the problem behavior.
4.	**Make a Plan**	A good plan often has 3 parts to it: **Preventing** the behavior by changing some of the who, what, and where's from Step 2. **Teaching** the child new ways to meet his or her needs. **Reacting** to the behavior when it does occur in more helpful ways.
5.	**Use the Plan**	Stick with it! Old habits die hard.
6.	**Reconsider the Plan**	Give your plan at least 2 weeks to start to work and then ask yourself, "How is it going?"

Step 1: Define the Problem

Clearly identify the problem behavior. Be specific. For instance, instead of saying "He won't do anything I tell him," describe exactly what he does when you tell him to do something. Does he throw the dishes when you ask him to set the table? Does he sit down on the floor and not "budge" when it's time to take a bath? Similarly, instead of saying "She gets upset all the time," try to describe what she does when she is upset. Does she cry, scream, and/or hide under the bed? Does she hit you?

Behaviors are specific observable actions. At this point we are not yet concerned with *why* the child does these behaviors. We are also not concerned with putting labels on the the child's behavior, such as "aggressive," "acting out," "hyperactive," "withdrawn," or "autistic." These types of labels are not very helpful in defining behavior. The best way to define problem behavior is to carefully observe the child and write down specifically what we see.

Notice the difference in the two lists of descriptions below. The "general labels" really don't tell us what the child does. For example, the label "aggressive" could mean hitting, or biting, scratching, yelling or many other actions. ***These labels tell us more about how we feel about the behavior than about the behavior itself.*** On the other hand, the observable actions listed in the right column are quite specific, we can focus on exactly what the child did (and didn't do).

General Labels	Observable Actions
aggressive	hits
mean	bites others on the hands & arms
angry	yells
self-stimulatory	rocks back and forth
stubborn	lays down on the floor
frustrated	cries
nasty	spits
uncooperative	throws food
upset	bangs head on the floor

Some children have more than one challenging behavior. If these behaviors are very similar and occur in the same situation you will probably try to change them at the same time. For example, some children may hit and bite other people in the same incident. These two behaviors should be specifically described and worked on together. On the other hand, some children have problem behaviors which are not closely related.

A child may scratch himself when left alone, and may throw himself on the floor when you ask him to do something. These behaviors are probably not closely related. You can't (and shouldn't) try to change all problem behaviors at once. To decide where to start, it is helpful to think of three different degrees of seriousness of problem behaviors.

3 LEVELS OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Destructive

These are obviously top priority! Work on these first.

Destructive behaviors ...

- are health or life threatening to the child or others.

Disruptive

These kinds of behaviors are not as high a priority as destructive behaviors. Work with them after you change any destructive behaviors.

Disruptive behaviors...

- hurt other people (for example, hitting that does not result in physical injury)
- interfere with learning (for example, crying or running away)
- prevent the person from participating in daily activities (for example, tantrums during daily activities such as bedtime, meal times, or getting ready for school);
- destroy property in a dangerous way (for example, using a knife to destroy furniture—not things like tearing paper)
- interfere with your ability to function as a family (for example, your child has tantrums in restaurants, so you feel your family cannot go out to dinner together)
- could become destructive if ignored

Distracting

These behaviors may not be serious enough to develop a plan for unless unless they are very important to you. If they are not that important to you, don't worry about developing a plan for them until all the child's other needs are met.

Distracting behaviors ...

- interfere with acceptance in the community (for example, echolalia or hand-flapping in public places);
- damage objects (for example, tearing books and papers)
- could become disruptive if ignored

STEP I: DEFINE THE PROBLEM

Name: Jenny Date: October 19, 1988

As specifically as possible, describe the problem or problems that you are concerned about. Label them them according to their seriousness (destructive, disruptive, or distracting). Circle the Behavior(s) that you will begin to work on first.

Description of Problem Behavior	Level of Seriousness
1. Hitting and pinching other people	☐ Destructive ☑ Disruptive ☐ Distracting
2. Crying when we leave the house	☐ Destructive ☑ Disruptive ☐ Distracting
3. Sucking her thumb	☐ Destructive ☐ Disruptive ☑ Distracting
4.	☐ Destructive ☐ Disruptive ☐ Distracting

STEP 2: GATHER INFORMATION

In this step you will discover what people, places, things, or activities seem to trigger the specific problem behavior(s). You will be a "detective," carefully observing and gathering "evidence." Information about trigger situations can help you to understand what purposes the behavior might be serving for the child. For example, if the behavior tends to occur more often when the child is left alone than when you are doing something with her, the purpose may be to get attention. You will seek answers to the following kinds of questions:

Who?	Who is present when the problem behavior occurs? How many people? Who is about to come in or about to leave? Are , children, teachers, parents, or strangers present? With whom does the problem behavior seldom or never occur? **Answers to these and similar "Who" questions help you to see if particular people or groups are connected to the problem behavior.**
What?	What is going on when the problem behavior occurs? Is the child being asked to do something? Is it free unstructured time? Is the child being asked to do something easy or hard? What are the other people present doing? Is it almost time to start a different activity? Is the person having to wait for help, attention or a turn? What is going on when the behavior seldom or never occurs? **"What" questions help you to discover the activities related to the behavior.**
When?	When does the problem occur? Every morning? Late at night? Monday morning? Friday afternoon? Before lunch? When does the problem almost never occur? **"When" questions help you figure out times and schedules related to the problem.**
Where?	Where does the problem behavior occur? On the playground? In the classroom? Is the child in a small space or a large open space? Does it occur at home? In the grocery store? At the movies? On the bus? Where does the problem behavior seldom or never occur? **"Where" questions help you understand places related to the problem.**

This information will help you in at least two different ways. First of all, you may decide to change some of these situations to prevent the behavior problem from occurring. Often these changes will be temporary, because we want people to learn to cope with the "real world" as much as possible. But, sometimes it is very helpful to temporarily avoid the "trigger" situations such as when everybody involved has fallen into negative patterns of interacting, when the behavior problem is dangerous to the child or others, or while the child is learning new skills. At other times you may decide that the changes will be necessary on a long term basis: For example, when the behavior tended to occur when the child was required to participate in particular activities that were never actually necessary or important. These decisions will be shared by the team.

The amount of time and effort that the team will need to spend gathering information will depend on many factors. For some behavior problems the team may already have informally observed and gathered the necessary information . We suggest that you start by using Step 2A Team Worksheet: Answering Key Questions. If members of the team can agree on the answers to these questions, it may be possible to move on to the next step without formally gathering additional information. It is critical that all team members share their opinions so that the team is sure that it has reached agreement.

At other other times the team may not have the information necessary to answer these questions and reach agreement. Sometimes behavior problems are very complicated and hard to figure out. At these times the team will need to develop a plan to collect additional information using Step 2A Worksheet: Recording Behaviors. Using this worksheet the team will record incidents of the behavior in different situations and times of the day.

Directions for Step 2a - Answering Key Questions Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to see if you can reach agreement on key questions about the specific behavior problem you are working on.

1. Prior to the team meeting, make enough copies of this worksheet for each member and one extra for the team.

2. Take 10 - 15 minutes and have each member of the team fill out a worksheet individually. Don't discuss the questions or compare answers at this point.

3. Now, discuss the key questions one at a time comparing your answers. Have a recorder write down the information on which you can reach agreement.

4. Look over your team's answers. On what questions could you reach agreement? On what questions were you unable to reach agreement? On what questions did you lack information to have a good discussion?

5. Make a team decision about whether you have enough information to move on to Step III: Developing a Theory. If you don't have enough information, proceed to the Step II Team Worksheet: Recording Behaviors.

STEP 2A: ANSWERING KEY QUESTIONS

Name: Jenny Date: October 19, 1988
Behavior: hitting and pinching

WHO IS PRESENT...

When the behavior tends to occur?	When the behavior almost never occurs?
Laura (sister) Sarah (mother)	Jeff (father) cousin Elizabeth grandmother

WHAT IS GOING ON...

When the behavior tends to occur?	When the behavior almost never occurs?
other family members watching t.v. Sarah on telephone Laura doing homework Laura and friends listening to records	mealtime bathtime getting dressed playing a game with Laura or Sarah

WHEN DOES THE BEHAVIOR...

Tend to occur?	Almost never occur?
afternoons, after school Saturdays	When doing things listed above

WHERE DOES THE BEHAVIOR...

Tend to occur?	Almost never occur?
at home: family room Laura's bedroom	at school

HOW OFTEN DOES THE BEHAVIOR OCCUR...

Per hour? not every hour Per day? 3-4 times Per week? 24 times

HOW LONG DOES THE BEHAVIOR OCCUR...

Per episode? 5 to 10 minutes

Directions for Step 2b - Recording Behaviors Worksheet

This worksheet will help the team to gather additional information needed to reach agreement on the Key Questions Worksheet.

1. Decide who will record behaviors, when, and during what activities. You will want to record behavior during the times and activities when you are most likely to observe the problem behavior. You also will want to get a good representation of these different problem times, for example: at home, school, and in the community; in the morning, afternoon, and evening; during structured and unstructured times. The recorder should list the times, places, and activities which team members will observe.

2. Discuss each item on the form and how it should be used. You might consider a practice session in which team members role-play a possible situation when the problem behavior could occur. Have other members of the team observe and record the incident. Then discuss and compare your observations until you feel that each person who will use the form understands how to fill it out correctly.

3. During the following weeks, use this form to collect information. Each person that collected information should bring enough copies of their completed forms for other members of the team to review.

4. At your next meeting, review and discuss the completed forms, looking for answers to the Key Questions.

5. Repeat the steps in using the Key Questions Worksheet. Can you now reach agreement as a team? If not, you may need to collect additional information specifically related to the questions that you can't reach agreement on.

6. Continue this process until the team feels that it can move on to Step 3: Developing a Theory.

STEP 2B : RECORDING BEHAVIORS

Name Jenny Date (s) October 20-23, 1988

Person Recording Sarah

Specific Problem Behavior hitting and pinching other people

When? (time, day, date)	What Happened Before the Behavior Occured?	Describe the behavior (include how intense, long, or how many?)	What Happened After the Behavior Occured?
Mon. 10/20 4:00 PM	Jenny, Laura and I in family room. Laura was telling me about school. Jenny on floor watching t.v. Laura and I on couch.	Jenny came over and hit me on the leg once, not too hard.	Laura and I stopped talking. I asked Jenny what was wrong. She stopped hitting and sat on my lap. I asked if she wanted a snack. She nodded yes, and went into the kitchen.
Mon. 10/20 5:15 PM	Jenny and Laura were in family room. I was in the kitchen, starting dinner. Laura yelled that Jenny was pinching her.	Laura said Jenny pinched her on the arm about four times, pretty hard.	Jenny stopped as soon as I got to the door. I told her it was not nice to pinch. She couldn't watch t.v. anymore and had to come to the kitchen with me.

Step 3: Develop a Theory

Now the team needs to develop a theory about why the child uses the behavior. We are interested in determining the purpose or motivation behind the behavior. As discussed in an earlier section, children's problem behavior usually has one or more of the following purposes:

Often, the information about who, what, when, and where that you gathered for Step 2 (Worksheet A) will help you to develop the theory. For example...

> Bill's parents and teachers noticed that Bill often hits his teacher when she asks him to read, an activity which is difficult for Bill. Bill's mother noticed that he hits her when she tells him to make his bed. They developed a theory that the purpose of Bill's hitting was to escape doing things which were hard for him or which he did not like to do.

> Janet's father noticed that she often cries and throws things when he or Janet's mother is on the telephone. Janet's teacher noted that Janet cries when other students are getting more attention than she. The team developed a theory that the purpose of Janet's crying is to get attention.

The information you may have recorded (on the Recording Behavior worksheets) about what happened after the behavior occured can also help you to develop your theory. For example, when Bill hit his teacher at school, he was sent to "time-out", where he had to sit for ten minutes. Yet Bill's hitting didn't seem to be decreasing; it fact, it was happening more often. The events that happen after Bill hit seemed to be teaching him that hitting was an effective way to *escape* from work he didn't like to do. Janet's parents and teachers noted on their daily logs that when Janet cried, people tended to gather around and comfort her so that she would stop. For Janet, crying seemed to serve the purpose of gaining ***attention***.

Figuring out the purpose of problem behaviors is one of the most important yet difficult steps in developing a plan for behavior change. One reason for this is that some children may use one behavior (which we consider a problem behavior) for several different purposes. For example, a child might hit people ***both*** to get attention and to escape from situations which he doesn't like. On the other hand, some children may

use different behaviors (all of which we consider to be problems) for the same purpose, such as hitting other people or biting themselves in order to get attention. When we consider that many children have had years to develop and practice their problem behaviors, it's not surprising that their behavior can get so complex.

At this point in the behavior change process, professionals and parents alike may be tempted to conclude that the behaviors happen for "no reason" and have "no pattern at all" But don't give up! Once you understand that a child usually keeps using a given behavior because it "works" for him or her in some way, you are usually in a better position to figure out this puzzle! The "stakes" may be quite high, for you and for the child, so it is worth struggling with this step of the process. The Step 3 Worksheet–*Develop a Theory* will help you in your problem-solving.

STEP 3: DEVELOP A THEORY

Name: Jenny

Behavior: hitting and pinching

Now you need to decide what purpose the behavior is serving for the child. Use the who-what-where-when information from Step 2 to think about the situations in which the behavior occurs. Do you see any consistent patterns in this information? You may also find the checklist below to be helpful in developing your theory. Remember, specific behaviors may serve more than one purpose for a child.

FIGURING OUT THE PURPOSE OF PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

Never	Sometimes	Often	
			The purpose of the behavior may be ATTENTION if...
☐	☐	☑	It occurs when you are not paying attention to the child (e.g., you are talking to someone else in the room, talking on the phone).
☐	☐	☑	It occurs when you stop paying attention to the child.
			The purpose of the behavior may be ESCAPE/AVOIDANCE if...
☑	☐	☐	It occurs when you ask the child to so something (e.g., household chore, getting ready for school, taking a bath) that he or she doesn't seem to like or want to do.
☑	☐	☐	It stops after you stop "making demands."
			The purpose of the behavior may be GETTING SOMETHING if...
☑	☐	☐	It occurs when you take away a favorite toy, food, or activity.
☐	☑	☐	It stops soon after you give the child a toy, food, or activity that he or she seems to like, or has recently requested.
☑	☐	☐	It occurs when the child can't have a toy,food, or activity he or she has requested.
			The purpose of the behavior may be SELF-REGULATION if...
☑	☐	☐	It tends to be performed over and over again, in a rhythmic or cyclical manner.
☑	☐	☐	It tends to happen when there is either a lot going on in the area or very llittle (e.g., noise, movement, people, activity...).
☑	☐	☐	The child can still do other things at the same time as he or she is performing the behavior.
			The purpose of the behavior may be PLAY if...
☑	☐	☐	It occurs over and over again in a rhythmic or cyclical manner.
☑	☐	☐	It would occur repeatedly when no one else is around.
☑	☐	☐	The child seems to enjoy performing the behavior (e.g., smiles, laughs...).
☑	☐	☐	The child seems to be in his or her "own world" when performing the behavior & he or she can't do other things at the same time.

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BEHAVIOR IS...

Attention

25

** Adated from Durand & Crimmins, 1988*

Step 4: Make a Plan

Your plan will consider three types of strategies: preventing, teaching, and *reacting. Most plans for serious problem behaviors will need to include all three kinds* of strategies.

Preventing Here we focus on avoiding situations that seem to trigger the problem. It often makes sense to try to prevent problems rather than react to them. Preventing problems saves "wear and tear" on everyone. Another reason to be preventative is that the more practice children have doing things the "wrong" way, the harder it is to teach them another way. (It's like learning to type with ten fingers once you're used to using two: The more practice you have with two fingers, the harder it is to learn to use ten!)

As we mentioned earlier, asking "who, what, when,and where" can give us information to use in making changes that can help prevent problems from occuring. Sometimes, there are things about the environment that should be changed permanently based on a person's preferences. Some of us avoid large crowds, busy supermarkets, camping trips, or in-laws. This is "normal" behavior, and should be acceptable for people with disabilities as well.

Other factors in the environment can be changed temporarily, as a way to prevent the problem until the child has learned new skills. This is similar to the idea of not keeping high calorie foods in your home when you are trying to lose weight. Later when you have changed your eating habits, you can resist the temptation to overeat!

Here are some examples of preventing:

1. John would scream whenever he saw a trash can. His mother started keeping them under tables or put lids on them. She never really knew why this worked, but it did!

2. A group home manager noticed that Don often had tantrums when a particular staff person was assigned to work with him. She scheduled that staff person to be on duty when Don was at school until they could train the staff person to work with Don in a more positive way and help Don and the staff person get to know each other better.

3. Kathy would bite her hand whenever she was corrected for making a mistake, such as when she was folding towels and was told she had not done it neatly enough. When her parents and teachers helped her so that she did things right the first time, she stopped biting herself.

Teaching The most important part of your 3-part plan involves teaching the child new skills. In Step 2 you used the information you have gathered to develop a theory about the purpose of the problem behavior. This part of your plan involves teaching the child a new way to achieve this same purpose. This means you need to show the child that the new skill will work better than the old behavior in achieving that purpose.

For example, if the purpose of the problem behavior is communicating something, then the person must be taught a new way of communicating the same thing. If a child indicates "I want something to drink" by screaming, he or she could learn to use a word, sign, or gesture to indicate "drink." If the purpose of a specific problem behavior is self-regulation or play, the person needs to learn a new way to self-regulate or entertain himself. For example, one alternative to covering your ears with your hand and screaming to block out loud noises that upset you would be learning to use a radio or tape player with headphones. Instead of throwing things on the floor for play, a child could learn to play Connect Four. Here are additional examples of teaching:

1. Tom learned to sign "break" instead of sitting on the floor when tired of working.

2. Brian learned to "give five" instead of grabbing people and pinching them when he wanted attention.

3. Kathy learned to ask for help instead of biting her hands when frustrated.

4. Larry learned to sign "help" instead of crying and tugging on people when he wanted something that was out of reach.

This manual cannot address all of the issues involved in teaching new skills to children with disabilities. We realize that teaching can be especially difficult at home, where parents have a household to manage and a family to take care of (as well as needing to have some time for themselves!). One way that parents can address this challenge is by working with the team to devise a plan for teaching some of the new skills at school. Here are some suggestions about how to teach:

1. Help the child do it the right way from the beginning– don't wait for the child to do it the "wrong" way and then correct the mistake.

2. Show the child what you want him or her to do—don't just say it, do it.

3. Break difficult tasks down into small steps and concentrate on teaching certain steps.

4. Give the child more attention for doing things the "right" way than for doing things the "wrong" way.

5. Give encouragement: "You're terrific!" "That's the way!" Give lots of smiles, hugs, and pats on the back.

6. Reward doing rather than finishing. Give praise or a hug when the child is making an effort to do the desired behavior—don't wait until he or she can do it perfectly, or until a task is done.

Reacting Reacting is how you respond to the child's problem behavior. Though we agree that your plan may need to include certain "consequences," this approach does not focus on dispensing "rewards" for good behavior and "punishments" for negative behavior. The "reward & punishment" approach may work to some extent, but it makes children dependent on authority and almost aways leads to far more punishing that rewarding when used with children with disabilities and challenging behaviors.

This approach requires that you and the other adults in the child's life change the way you react when problems occur. You need to show the child that the problem behavior won't work anymore. At the same time, you need to show the child what will work. In other words, instead of just reacting to problems, you are going to stay focused on preventing and teaching.

Some ways of reacting that fit with this approach are: ignore–redirect–& reward; logical consequences; and cooling off. The strategy that you use depends on the child and the situation, but we can give you some general rules to help you decide which strategy to use when.

Ignore–redirect– & reward This strategy is very different from simply ignoring negative behavior and praising positive behavior. Nor does it mean ignoring the child and letting the behavior continue. It requires you to say nothing about the undesired behavior (ignore) while focusing the child's attention on what you want him or her to do instead (redirect). Redirecting can involve gestures, demonstrations, or putting the person's hand in contact with the materials. Then, as soon as the child attempts to respond in the way you directed, you reward this participation verbally and with physical touch.

This strategy is especially useful with children who do not understand a lot of talk. It is also recommended for use with children who do not seem to want to do anything that you ask of them. That is, if your information-gathering did not reveal that certain people, places, or tasks seemed to predict the problem behavior, but instead showed that the child simply doesn't like interacting with people or doing things with them, then this child probably needs a lot of ignoring–redirecting–& rewarding. This is especially true when problems are occurring.

CAUTIONS!

Behavior that is dangerous or harmful should not just be ignored and allowed to continue; the child and others must be protected. The important thing is to do this in a way that does not call more attention to the negative behavior or upset the child even more.

We often tend to try to "redirect" verbally instead of silently. That is, we nag, "Pick that up...I told you to pick that up...Right now...Cut out that screaming...did you hear me?" Verbal reminders are sometimes necessary and appropriate, but in general, they are over-used and ineffective. The general rule to follow is: Say it once, and then act. If the person doesn't do it after the first request, then he or she either needs more information about what to do (which you can give through gestures or by showing the child what to do), or more reward for doing it the desired way. We often forget that our excited verbal corrections and reminders can actually be more rewarding in terms of the amount of attention we're giving than our calm and matter-of-fact verbal rewards ("Good job." "O.K.").

Natural & logical consequences. are in a way a more sophisticated form of the ignore-redirect-reward strategy. Some problem behaviors have ***natural*** consequences which can teach children what to do next time better than an artificial consequence that we might use (e.g., child breaks a radio he received as a gift and must save his own money if he wants another one). However, sometimes a natural consequence is either not available (e.g., parent asked a child to clean her room but she refused) or it would be harmful to the child (e.g., child ran out in front of cars). In such a case, you can use a *logical* consequence. A logical consequence for not doing work (schoolwork or chores) is not having time for your favorite activity. A logical consequence for running out into the street is not being allowed to play in the front yard.

When using natural & logical consequences, it is important to give a child another chance next time. When you tell a child that he can have free time after taking out the garbage and he doesn't take out the garbage, tell him "you chose not to take out the garbage today, so you will not get to play. You can try again tomorrow." Or, if you have told a child that she must go outside to play with the basketball, and she bounces it on the ceiling, then tell her: "You chose to bounce the ball inside, so you can't play with the basketball any more today. You can have another chance to play basketball outside tomorrow."

CAUTIONS!

For children who do not understand speech, you will need to communicate rules and consequences in a different way. If the child has an alternative communication system, such as sign language or a picture symbol system, then you will need to use those forms to communicate the rules. For children who do not have a sophisticated enough communication system to allow you to communicate rules and consequences, you need to show them by your behavior what the rules and consequences are.

Cooling-off. This means simply having the child get away from the place where the problem occurred, for only as long as it takes for the child to calm down. (This way of reacting is similar to the idea of time-out, but we are not calling it that because there are so many different kinds of time-out and most of them are used as punishment.) It is similar to the idea of going for a walk when you need to "cool off," and it can work for children the same way as it does for adults. The best use of the "cooling-off" strategy is to help the child calm down before he or she loses control. It can be used as a way to help the child learn to control himself or herself.

Crisis Management. If a child sometimes hurts himself or herself or other people, or damages property in a dangerous way, your plan for reacting will need to consider "crisis management." The idea of crisis management is to protect the child and others and minimize the problem. The crisis management procedure should not be thought of as a punishment for the behavior.

The first thing to consider is who will intervene in a crisis. If you are alone, who should you call? If there are several adults present, who is best at helping the child calm down and should therefore be the first person to intervene? Next, what will you do? Will you hold the child, or does that make him more agitated? If you have a choice between a crowded room and a secluded area, will you try to move the person? Are there things like music, deep breathing, taking a walk, or talking to the person in a soothing voice that help him or her to regain control, or does he or she calm down more quickly if left alone? It's important to remember that as you use the really important parts of your plan—preventing the problem situations and teaching the child other more acceptable behaviors to achieve his or her purpose—you will have to rely less on reacting and crisis management.

At this point the team should make a plan which includes all 3 types of strategies and, if necessary, a crisis management plan. The Step 4 Worksheet: Make a Plan, provides a way to organize these strategies on paper.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING A PLAN

1. Build on your own strengths, don't emphasize your weaknesses. For example, if you know that you are not likely to be consistent in reacting by delivering a certain reward or negative consequence, focus on preventing.

2. Change one thing at at time. Target a particular time or day or a daily routine. Mealtimes, getting ready for school, bedtime, or any activity that occurs on a daily basis are often good places to start.

3. Just as you are not going to try to change all of the child's problems at once, don't expect yourself to change all at once. Be realistic about changes that you can expect yourself to make.

4. Make sure that your plan is suitable for your child's actual age. If your child is 12 years old and doesn't know how to play except by dropping and twirling objects, teach him or her to use a tape player, to look at magazines, or to play a simple card game; don't teach him or her to play with young children's toys.

5. When it comes to making decisions about when to give the child choices, think about the child's actual age. If your 20-year old son who has a disability refuses to wear a sweater to school even though you think he should, ask yourself what you would do if he did not have a disability. If no actual harm would come from the child's choice, maybe you shouldn't worry about it. People can't learn to be responsible for their choices and decisions if they don't have a chance to try.

6. Where there is a conflict between you and the child over what he or she will do or not do, think in terms of compromise rather than winning or losing.

STEP 4: MAKE A PLAN

Name: Jenny
Behavior: hitting and pinching
Date: November 1, 1988

A good plan will usually have 3 parts:

Preventing: How will you change the situations (who-what-when-where) that seem to be associated with the behavior problem?

Teaching: What other behavior or skill will you (or others) teach the child that will meet his or her purpose in a more acceptable way?

Reacting: How will you react when the problem behavior occurs in a way that does not "feed into" the child's purpose, cause you greater upset and stress, or punish the child?

PREVENTING	TEACHING	REACTING/CRISIS MGMT.
1.) Make a picture schedule for after school and on Saturday. Show when it's time to play with Laura, play alone, watch t.v. shows, help with dinner, eat dinner, get ready for bed. 2) On the schedule (during time before dinner) alternate independent activities with things Jenny does with others. 3.) When Laura is busy with friends or homework, make sure Jenny has something to do with another person. 4.) Have Jenny's friend from school come over once a week.	1.) Teach Jenny some games and other things she can do on her own, such as playing "Atari," listening to tapes, fixing a snack, or playing "Concentration." 2.) Teach Jenny to sign the phrase "I want you" to gain attention.	Stay calm! Redirect Jenny to an activity that she can do alone or with another family member. Have her do the activity in a different room from where the problem behavior occured.

Step Five: Use the Plan.

This is the point at which all your thought and planning result in action! Examine your plan very carefully. Do you have all the materials that you need, such as new age-appropriate games for your child, or pictures for a communication booklet? Have you scheduled your time in a way that will allow you to use the plan without unnecessary stress? Do you feel comfortable in your ability to use the techniques that you have planned? You may want to practice some of the techniques with friends or other members of your family. Set up the situation and then role-play or act it out. Practice until you feel really comfortable with your skills and don't need to think about each thing you will say or do. Don't expect problems to immediately go away and resist the temptation to give up in the beginning. Keep using your plan for at least 2 weeks before you move on to the next step.

STEP 5: USE THE PLAN

What arrangements do you need to make to follow-through with the plan? What is your timeline for getting materials and help, and starting the plan?

Materials needed:

pictures for picture schedule
"Walkman" cassette player and tapes
"Concentration" game with pictures

Help from others needed:

make the picture schedule
teach Jenny to use it
teach Jenny to play new games
teach Jenny to use "Walkman"

Person	Task	Date to Initiate/ Complete
Jeff (Dad)	get poster board and film for picture schedule	11/4/88
Sarah (Mom)	take Jenny and Laura shopping for games	11/4/88
	call Jenny's friend's Mom to ask her over once a week	
Sandy (caseworker)	take pictures for picture schedule	Thurs. 11/5/88 after school
Jeff, Sarah, Laura	make picture schedule	Tues. 11/10/88 after school
Ben (teacher)	show family how to use picture schedule with Jenny	Thurs. 11/12 and Tues. 11/17/88 after school
	show family how to play new games	

Step Six: Reconsider the Plan

After a few weeks of using your plan, ask, "How is it going?" If it's going well, you can soon begin "undoing" some of the temporary ***preventing*** strategies. If it's not going well, it's possible that your theory about the purpose of the behavior was incorrect, or that some people are still reacting in ways that allow the problem behavior to be effective. You may need to make some adjustments in your plan or talk to some other people (other parents or professionals) to see if they have ideas you haven't thought of. Remember, too, that old habits die hard; if the child is a teenager or young adult, he or she may have had this problem behavior for a long time; the entire family may be stuck in a pattern of reacting that is difficult to change. Real changes often take time. A decrease in the intensity or number of times the behavior happens may mean that you are on the right track.

STEP 6: RECONSIDER THE PLAN

Name: Jenny Date: December 12, 1988

At this point you want to carefully consider your success at both following through with the plan, and how successful it has been in preventing or changing the problem behavior that you are working on.

Have you been able to follow the plan you wrote?

For preventing: Yes, we made the picture schedule and try to use it every day.

For teaching: We've made a good start. We tried to teach Jenny too many games at first. Then we decided to focus on two games.

For reacting: Jeff still tries to intervene too much instead of letting the person who is involved handle it.

Do you still feel that you "theory" about the purpose of the behavior was correct?
Yes!

What positive changes have you seen? Laura doesn't complain about spending time with Jenny. She has time for her homework and friends. Jenny only hit Laura 3 times last week. Jenny enjoys being with her own friend, Nancy.

What areas of the plan do you need to continue to work on using as planned?
Saturdays are more difficult than after school. It's hard to find enough things to keep Jenny busy. It's tempting to let her sit in front of the t.v.

What areas of the plan need to be changed? We need to find more ways for Jenny to spend time with girls her own age. Investigate after school activities, Brownies, and Saturday morning activities at the Girls' Club.

CONCLUSIONS

The difficult thing about this approach is that there are no easy or immediate solutions to the problems you are facing. Solutions usually require an ongoing problem-solving approach using the six step process. You don't need to feel that you have to do it all on your own. You should keep discussing the process with other members of your family and professionals that also work with your child. By becoming a central part of this problem-solving process you won't have to rely on outside "experts" who may not understand your child or family situation. Positive changes in your child's behavior that result from this problem-solving approach will tend to last and will improve relationships within your family. Changes based on a plan that considers the purposes of the child's behavior will not only decrease problem behaviors, but will teach your child new and important skills to use in the real world.

Our experiences with children who have developmental disabilities and challenging behavior have led us to the conclusion that changes in children only come about when adults change their own behavior. We need to learn to stay calm when things seem "out of control," to keep focused on what we want to accomplish, and not let problem behavior become the focus of our relationship with the child.

REFERENCES

We have drawn upon a number of other authors' ideas in writing this manual. This list of books and chapters is provided both to give credit to those authors and to provide you with information about sources you can turn to learn more about positive approaches to challenging behavior.

Dinkmeyer, D. and McKay, G.D. (1982). The parent's handbook: Systematic training for effective parenting. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service.

Donnellan, A.M., LaVigna, G., Negri - Shoultz, N., and Fassbender, L.L. (1988). Progress without punishment: Effective approaches for learners with behavior problems. New York: Teachers College Press.

Dreikurs, R., and Grey, L. (1970). A parent's guide to child discipline. New York: Hawthorne Books.

Evans, I.M., and Meyer, L.M. (1985). An educative approach to behavior problems. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Lovett, H. (1985). Cognitive counseling and persons with special needs. New York: Praeger.

McGee, J.J. Menolascino, F.J., Hobbs., D.C., and Menousek., P.E. (1987). Gentle teaching: A nonaversive approach for helping persons with mental retardation. New York: Human Sciences Press.

Meyer, L.M., and Evans, I.M. (1986). Modification of excess behavior: An adaptive and functional approach for educational and community contexts. In R.M. Morner, L.N. Meyer, and M.D. Fredericks (Eds), Education of learners with severe handicaps: Exemplary service strategies (pp315-350). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Meyer, L.M., and Evans, I.M. (1989). Non-aversive intervention for behavior problems: A manual for community and residential settings. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

BLANK PROBLEM-SOLVING FORMS

The following blank forms are included for your use. You may freely copy and use these forms in your problem-solving efforts.

STEP I: DEFINE THE PROBLEM

Name: _____ Date: _____

As specifically as possible, describe the problem or problems that you are concerned about. Label them them according to their seriousness (destructive, disruptive, or distracting). Circle the Behavior(s) that you will begin to work on first.

Description of Problem Behavior	Level of Seriousness
1. _____	❑ Destructive
_____	❑ Disruptive
_____	❑ Distracting
_____	
_____	
_____	
2. _____	❑ Destructive
_____	❑ Disruptive
_____	❑ Distracting
_____	
_____	
_____	
3. _____	❑ Destructive
_____	❑ Disruptive
_____	❑ Distracting
_____	
_____	
_____	
4. _____	❑ Destructive
_____	❑ Disruptive
_____	❑ Distracting
_____	
_____	

STEP 2A: ANSWERING KEY QUESTIONS

Name: _____ Date: _____
Behavior: _____

WHO IS PRESENT...

When the behavior tends to occur? When the behavior almost never occurs?

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

WHAT IS GOING ON...

When the behavior tends to occur? When the behavior almost never occurs?

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

WHEN DOES THE BEHAVIOR...

Tend to occur? Almost never occur?

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

WHERE DOES THE BEHAVIOR...

Tend to occur? Almost never occur?

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

HOW OFTEN DOES THE BEHAVIOR OCCUR...

Per hour?_____ Per day?_____ Per week? _____

HOW LONG DOES THE BEHAVIOR OCCUR...

Per episode? _____

STEP 2B : RECORDING BEHAVIORS

Name _____ Date (s)_____

Person Recording _____

Specific Problem Behavior _____

_____

When? (time, day, date)	What Happened Before the Behavior Occured?	Describe the behavior (include how intense, long, or how many?)	What Happened After the Behavior Occured?

STEP 3: DEVELOP A THEORY

Name: _____

Behavior: _____

Now you need to decide what purpose the behavior is serving for the child. Use the who-what-where-when information from Step 2 to think about the situations in which the behavior occurs. Do you see any consistent patterns in this information? You may also find the checklist below to be helpful in developing your theory. Remember, specific behaviors may serve more than one purpose for a child.

FIGURING OUT THE PURPOSE OF PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

Never Sometimes Often

The purpose of the behavior may be ATTENTION if...

- ❑ ❑ ❑ It occurs when you are not paying attention to the child (e.g., you are talking to someone else in the room, talking on the phone).
- ❑ ❑ ❑ It occurs when you stop paying attention to the child.

The purpose of the behavior may be ESCAPE/AVOIDANCE if...

- ❑ ❑ ❑ It occurs when you ask the child to so something (e.g., household chore, getting ready for school, taking a bath) that he or she doesn't seem to like or want to do.
- ❑ ❑ ❑ It stops after you stop "making demands."

The purpose of the behavior may be GETTING SOMETHING if...

- ❑ ❑ ❑ It occurs when you take away a favorite toy, food, or activity.
- ❑ ❑ ❑ It stops soon after you give the child a toy, food, or activity that he or she seems to like, or has recently requested.
- ❑ ❑ ❑ It occurs when the child can't have a toy,food, or activity he or she has requested.

The purpose of the behavior may be SELF-REGULATION if...

- ❑ ❑ ❑ It tends to be performed over and over again, in a rhythmic or cyclical manner.
- ❑ ❑ ❑ It tends to happen when there is either a lot going on in the area or very llittle (e.g., noise, movement, people, activity...).
- ❑ ❑ ❑ The child can still do other things at the same time as he or she is performing the behavior.

The purpose of the behavior may be PLAY if...

- ❑ ❑ ❑ It occurs over and over again in a rhythmic or cyclical manner.
- ❑ ❑ ❑ It would occur repeatedly when no one else is around.
- ❑ ❑ ❑ The child seems to enjoy performing the behavior (e.g., smiles, laughs...).
- ❑ ❑ ❑ The child seems to be in his or her "own world" when performing the behavior & he or she can't do other things at the same time.

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BEHAVIOR IS...

** Adapted from Durand & Crimmins, 1988*

STEP 4: MAKE A PLAN

Name: _____

Behavior: _____

Date: _____

A good plan will usually have 3 parts:

Preventing: How will you change the situations (who-what-when-where) that seem to be associated with the behavior problem?

Teaching: What other behavior or skill will you (or others) teach the child that will meet his or her purpose in a more acceptable way?

Reacting: How will you react when the problem behavior occurs in a way that does not "feed into" the child's purpose, cause you greater upset and stress, or punish the child?

PREVENTING	TEACHING	REACTING/CRISIS MGMT.

STEP 5: USE THE PLAN

What arrangements do you need to make to follow-through with the plan? What is your timeline for getting materials and help, and starting the plan?

Materials needed: _____

Help from others needed: _____

Person	Task	Date to Initiate/ Complete

STEP 6: RECONSIDER THE PLAN

Name: _____ Date: _____

At this point you want to carefully consider your success at both following through with the plan, and how successful it has been in preventing or changing the problem behavior that you are working on.

Have you been able to follow the plan you wrote?

For preventing: _____

_____

_____

For teaching: _____

_____

_____

For reacting: _____

_____

_____

Do you still feel that you "theory" about the purpose of the behavior was correct?

_____

_____

_____

What positive changes have you seen? _____

_____

_____

_____

What areas of the plan do you need to continue to work on using as planned?

_____

_____

_____

What areas of the plan need to be changed? _____

_____

_____